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Atari Online News, Etc.
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A-ONE #0737 09/09/05

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~ Columbus Atari Club! ~ New Trojan Uses Koran! ~ NerdTV Is Now Free!

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It's always tough going back to work after a vacation. I'm just not ready to get back to the routine work grind. It's taken me a week to get close to uncovering my desktop! Lots of things just kept piling up, waiting for my return. Sooner or later, I'll get caught up; I always do.

Thinking over the years that I've been a part of writing for an online magazine, I remember my longtime friend and former editor, Ralph Mariano of STReport fame, and how he always took a stand against just about any injustice that he felt needed commentary - be it Atari-related or some something else going on in the "real" world. I can't help but think about what he's currently saying about the tragedy that has occurred in the gulf states with this recent hurricane. Ralph, as we all know, never minced words. He always told it like it is, from his perspective. Being close to the area that was affected, I'm sure that this catastrophe has affected him deeply. Personally, I still cannot believe the slow action taken to help the victims down there. There's certainly enough blame to go around; and I'm sure that Ralph would point that out quite effectively. I'm sure that there will be a number of cover-ups, as well as scapegoats. None of that will help to bring back victims and their lives, homes, etc. Hopefully, something like this will never occur again. And, it does something to help us be better prepared to handle such an emergency. Please, do what you can to help, by whatever means possible. Off my soapbox.

Until next time...

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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Atari Swapmeet to be September 10

Here's a last-minute reminder of this weekend's event:

Subject: Atari swapmeet to be September 10 in Columbus, Ohio

Here are details for the annual swapmeet to be held by
the Columbus Atari club:

DATE: Saturday, September 10, 2005.
TIMES: 9 am to 3 pm.
ADMISSION: $4. (For vendors, including table: $6.)
PLACE: Oakland Park Community Building, 980 Lenore Avenue,
Columbus, Ohio.
MORE INFO AT: http://www.angelfire.com/oh4/acec/acec.html
CONTACT: R. Wayne Arenz (rarenz at columbus dot rr dot com)

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's been a heck of a week, and news is still emerging from the mucky depths of New Orleans. I'm not going to say a lot about it this week, because it's everywhere you turn. You can't swing a dead cat without hitting someone who wants to tell you something new about what's going on in New Orleans. I DO want to mention that once the width and depth of the devastation in New Orleans have numbed us to just about everything else, there will still be communities from Biloxi to Gulfport to Mobile... and probably beyond... that are also going to by trying to get their houses in order. Please remember to donate what you can to your favorite reputable charity. The people... indeed, the entire communities... need our help. Let's get 'em some. It's a sure bet we'll get it to 'em faster than the government.

Speaking of governments... I would never have imagined that the United States would be the recipient of offers of aid from the cadre of countries that we're now hearing from... China, France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia... oh, God bless Indonesia. Would you ever in your wildest dreams have thought about Indonesia offering aid to the United States?

Well, I'll tell you what!... if we do ANYTHING but show our gratefulness and kinship, we are not the people that we think we are. If I forgot to mention a country that's offered aid that's near and dear to your heart, please forgive me. There have been dozens of countries that have made offers of help, and I simply can't remember them all.

I find it remarkable, and even heartwarming, that even though there have been so many very basic disagreements lately, these countries have offered assistance. Even though I'm not an assigned spokesperson for my country, I'd like to thank them all. There's only one country that I'd like to make a request of, and that's Afghanistan. Instead of giving us aid or assistance, just give us that six-foot-six son-of-a-gun dragging

the dialysis machine behind him!

Okay, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

'Peter' asks for help in resolving a problem with COPS and Xaaes on a CT60:

"I'm having issues with COPS in Xaaes/FreeMiNT 1.16.0 - 1.16.CUR. Cops starts up, but crashes when it loads CPXs. Doesn't matter which CPXs, and fooling around with the memory protection settings doesn't help either. I've tried starting it both as an APP and as an ACC. I can of course use zControl, but I want to use COPS. Any clues?"

Adam Klobukowski tells Peter:

"Probably Cops does not flush 060 caches after loading CPX."

Peter tells Adam:

"I forgot to try it with caches off. I should do that. Thanks!"

'Dave' asks for help getting into his misbehaving C: drive:

"Just setting up a Gasteiner HD with an Atari 4160 STE. I've formatted all the partitions, and copied a few ACCs into the auto folder along with the Little Green Selector (LGS) program. Problem is that LGS causes the ST to freeze on bootup and as C is now the boot drive I can't get into disable it. I tried putting a disk in to the A drive but the ST keeps trying and failing to boot from C.

Can't even get in booting from the Gasteiner disks either. How can I get back into the C drive and disabled LGS?"

Edward Baiz tells Dave:

"Hopefully you are using HDDriver. Just boot up the STe using a floppy so all you get is a desktop with the A and B drive icons. Then run the HDDriver program and install the C hard drive icon. You should be able to get in and adjust what needs to be adjusted. I do it all the time this way when I have a booting problem."

Ronald Hall adds:

"Which hard drive software are you using? With HDDriver, and most of the other HD software, you can use a keypress combination at bootup to achieve various things.

Try holding <alt>, <control>, and <shift> in various combinations at boot time. It works, I've done it before as well. I just can't remember the -exact- combinations right now. <grin>

Try them one at a time first, then try 2 key combinations like <control> and <shift> together at the same time.

By the way, sometimes just because it freezes at a certain point, doesn't necessarily mean its the last thing you see on the screen. It probably is what you said, but once you do get back in, be prepared to disable all your ACCs and add one at time back, until you find the exact culprit."

Coda adds:

"Its in the ROM. Pressing and Holding ALT at boot time will bypass booting from hard disk, and boot from floppy."

Mike Freeman asks about 'the best' ZIP program:

"I currently use STZip 2.6 and unzip 5.1. Those seem to work for most things. However, recently these have not been able to unzip some things - specifically FreeMint kernals, XaAES snapshots, and anything from Patrice Mandin. What do people use to get those? I normally run Magic 6 because of various problems getting Mint working right, as well as it's horrible lacking of a good GUI. Can someone please suggest something that would work for me on that OS?"

Peter West tells Mike:

"I don't know if you know, but there are later versions of both: ZIP23_02 and UNZIP540. Usually I use ArcView which calls UNZIP540.TTP, or sometimes 2-in-1 which calls ZIPJR.TTP. So far I haven't come across any ZIPs which one of these didn't handle (but I haven't tried to unzip any of those mentioned above)."

Edward Baiz adds:

"STZip 2.6 is ok, but it has some bugs. I use Arcview which is a great shell program. It uses Unzip.TTP. I also have LZH,TAR and ZOO incorporated with this. Works great..."

Mike asks Edward:

"I'll give it a try, but would that solve my problem? It's still using unzip.ttp (which I'm assuming is the same as the unzip.ttp included in the unzip 5.1 archive? maybe not?)

Basically, both STZIP and Unzip cannot find any files in the archive at all if I leave them as downloaded. STZIP shows an oddly truncated folder filename, and maybe a file or two, but nothing exists in the folder. Unzip simply says that the archive contains no files and quits. If I change the filename to be 8+3 instead of long filename (i.e. alpha.zip instead of alpha-04-september-2005.zip as is the case with the latest XaAES snapshot), then Unzip will actually recognize that there are files in the archive, but still won't be able to write them to the disk (there is enough disk space, and any other file unzips fine there). Not sure what the problem is, but it seems to happen most often

with Mint-related items, and people who specifically program using gcc and other Mint-specific tools. Maybe it’s something different between the way Mint’s ZIP compression works as opposed to other TOS/Magic compatible versions? I don’t know! Thanks for your input!"

St-Aphane Perez adds:

"Try this one :

ftp://chapelie .rma.ac.be/atari/archivers/zip20.lzh
It works perfectly and is faster than STZIP on CT60."

Coda tells Mike:

"With MiNT and MiNT archives you want to be using zip 2.3 and unzip 5.5 or greater. Get these from http://sparemint.atariforge.net/sparemint

Mike asks Coda:

"One problem with that... it’s an RPM file -- no way to unpack it with Magic. And I just can’t get a usable full Mint setup (even with EasyMint) in order to unpack it with that. If someone is willing to e-mail the binary to me in a form that is usable under Magic, then I’ll definitely try it! Please use the address below my signature. Thanks for your suggestion, though!"

Well folks, that’s it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - Games To Get You Off Couch!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Controlling Video Game Sales?

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Games That Force You to Get Off Couch

Every article about America’s obesity epidemic seems to mention video games. That’s not surprising, considering that video games have been blamed for juvenile delinquency, low SAT scores, teenage promiscuity, high gasoline prices and just about every other problem facing the nation.

But being a dedicated gamer doesn’t mean you have to turn into a Jabba the Hutt-sized couch potato, particularly if your regimen includes selections from the ever-growing genre of rhythm games.

To play games like Konami’s "Dance Dance Revolution," you have to replace your controller with a floor pad and try to match the onscreen action by stepping on different sections. Even the most devoted gym rats will work up a sweat during a good "DDR" session.

Any of the following games are a good bet to get you up off your La-Z-Boy:

* "Pump It Up: Exceed" (Mastiff, $59.99, for the PlayStation 2, Xbox): "Dance Dance Revolution" remains the most popular rhythm game in America, but in Asia it’s being challenged by "Pump It Up." Likewise, "DDR" experts will find themselves challenged by this newcomer, thanks to a simple gameplay twist. Instead of having pressure points directly to the left, right, front and back of the player, the "Pump It Up" pad puts them on the corners, demanding quite a bit more agility.

Oddly, the additional movement makes the workout feel more like dancing. "Pump It Up" is not recommended for those who are out of shape or asthmatic; progressing through just the first few levels is exhausting. Later levels require you to press three buttons at a time, so you have to crouch and use your hands - good practice if you have ambitions of becoming a break-dancer. The music is the usual beat-centric techno, with enough elements of metal, classical and Latin to keep things interesting. Three stars out of four.

* "In the Groove" (RedOctane, $39.99, for the PlayStation 2): "DDR" fans impatient for Konami to release some fresh beats have flocked to this game from dance pad manufacturer RedOctane. "In the Groove" sticks to the classic dance pad layout, but like "Pump It Up," it throws in some three- and four-button moves that will have you hitting the floor on all fours.

Fortunately for some of us geezers, "In the Groove" has five difficulty levels, starting with a laid-back novice mode that lets you ease your way into the game. A fitness mode asks you to input your weight and then tells you how many calories you’ve burned in a session.

The music, again, is a lot of bass-heavy techno, although disco-fied remakes of tunes like Natalie Imbruglia’s "Torn" and the Cardigans’ "My Favorite Game" sent us into a fit of ’90s nostalgia. Three stars out of four.

* "EyeToy Play 2" (Sony, $49.99, for the PlayStation 2): Maybe you’re looking for more of an upper body workout? "Play 2" is the latest application for Sony’s EyeToy peripheral, a camera that picks up your own movement. For example, you can swing punches at an onscreen boxer, or use your hands as paddles in a game of pingpong. You can play air guitar or drums, kick soccer balls or hit home runs, wield a chain saw or a cheese grater.

At times the lack of precise control is frustrating, but all the games are

very simple, and there are a lot of them. That simplicity and variety - along with the sheer ridiculousness of watching your friends flail their arms about - make "Play 2" an ideal party game. Two stars out of four.

On the Net:

"Pump It Up: Exceed": http://www.piu4home.com/

"In the Groove": http://www.inthegroove.com/

"EyeToy Play 2": http://www.eyetoy.com/

California Lawmakers OK Control of Video Game Sales

California lawmakers have approved a bill that would ban the sale of violent video game to minors, but Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has not yet taken a position on the legislation, his office said on Friday.

The bill would end the sale and rental of violent games to minors that depict serious injury that is especially heinous, atrocious or cruel. It allows for $1,000 fines for violators and requires violent video games to be labeled.

The Democratic-controlled legislature approved the measure late on Thursday, but the governor’s office said the actor- turned-politician - whose Hollywood film career includes violent movies - has not taken a position on the bill.

The $10-billion video game industry has bitterly contested the bill. Game developers and console makers say laws restricting game sales are unnecessary because their industry already has safeguards to prevent minors from buying "Mature"-rated games.

The debate over video game content grew more heated in July when game publisher Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. was forced to pull a blockbuster game from retailers because of hidden sex scenes.

The controversy over the best-selling game "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" prompted calls in the U.S. Congress for a crackdown on the sales of violent and sex-laden games to minors.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Firefox 1.5 Beta Expected Soon

The first beta test version of the next major upgrade to the popular

Firefox open-source browser will be available next week, the Mozilla Foundation has announced.

Firefox 1.5 Beta 1 will be available September 8, according to a posting in the section of the Mozilla Foundation's Web site devoted to developer news.

A second beta version of Firefox 1.5 is currently slated for October 5, according to the posting. The update is running a little later than initial projections that it would become available in late summer.

Meanwhile, Firefox 1.5 Release Candidate 1 is scheduled for October 28. A version described as release candidate is usually the same as a final version that is made available for users to test and discover any remaining bugs.

Tuesday's posting didn't go into details of what new features and improvements Firefox 1.5 will offer users, but, according to information on the Mozilla Foundation's Web site, some enhancements Firefox developers have worked on in alpha test versions of the upgrade include:

A software update system to streamline product upgrades, faster browser navigation, the ability to reorder browser tabs through drag-and-drop operations, improved pop-up blocking, and better support for Mac OS X

The Mozilla Foundation didn't immediately reply to a request for comment.

After recently giving the dominant Microsoft Internet Explorer some competition, Firefox has slipped a bit in popularity. However, developers at The Mozilla foundation recently made some organizational changes to further promote the open-source project, such as creating a subsidiary to promote its products.

New Free Software License Takes Aim at Patents

The free software foundation said on Tuesday it would start adapting rules for development and use of free software by including penalties against those who patent software or use anti-piracy technology.

Free software needs to be licensed under specific rules to guarantee that it can be freely studied, copied, modified, reused, shared and redistributed. The Linux operating system kernel is one of the best known examples of free software.

The most popular rule book, the GNU General Public License (GPL) developed by Richard Stallman, was developed 14 years ago, before big Internet shops and web services.

The license needs to be adapted to a world in which e-commerce firms like Amazon.com (Nasdaq:AMZN - news) have patented 'one click ordering' which prevents software makers from freely using such a feature in their programs, said the president of the Free Software Foundation Europe, Georg Greve.

"Software patents are clearly a menace to society and innovation. We like this to be more explicit," Greve said.

The idea is that if someone uses software patents against free software,

that company or person loses the right to distribute that particular program and use it in their product, he added.

Such a clause may have some impact, because many commercial companies have benefited from free software. The GPL is employed by tens of thousands of software projects, and companies and governments around the world use it in their software or services.

Such software runs on or is embedded in devices ranging from mobile phones, handheld computers and home networking appliances to mainframes and supercomputing clusters.

Others in the open source community were doubtful, and warned the clause may be "toothless."

"Someone who uses a patent against a piece of software will usually be a competitor and won't care about the right to distribute that particular program himself," said Florian Mueller, an intellectual property specialist who founded NoSoftwarePatents.com.

The European Union failed to adopt a new software law earlier this year, after a stalemate in the heated debate between advocates of free software and commercial companies which wanted more freedom to patent software.

Stallman will write a draft version of the new GPL by December, after which it will be evaluated and discussed by thousands of organizations, software developers and software users in 2006.

The draft version may contain a proposal to penalize those companies which use digital rights management (DRM) software which protects songs and films against piracy, and which is seen as an anomaly by the free software association.

"We're fundamentally opposed to DRM. We think it's a dead end for society," Greve said, adding all software should be free to use and that artists could be paid for their films and music by a general 'taxation' on Internet connections.

"Web access could come with a cultural flat fee," he said.

This position is expected to lead to a fierce debate.

"I can't imagine they really want to ostracize companies that use DRM. There are highly legitimate interests of copyright holders involved," said Mueller.

The efforts by the free software foundations in the United States, Europe, India and Latin America will be supported by a 150,000 euro grant from a Dutch not-for-profit Internet development association called NLnet.

The new GPL will also be adapted to address regional differences in law and language, Greve said.

Court Orders Kazaa to Stop Pirates

A federal judge on Monday ordered distributors of the popular file-swapping program Kazaa to alter the software, which millions have downloaded, so it

can no longer be used for music piracy.

Hailed as a victory by the recording industry that brought the suit, the decision has implications well beyond Australia, where Kazaa executives are based, because Kazaa's users span the globe.

In some ways, it mirrors the U.S. Supreme Court's June ruling that Hollywood and the music industry can sue technology companies that encourage their customers to steal music and movies over the Internet.

Federal Court Judge Murray Wilcox determined in Monday's ruling that Kazaa's owners and distributors, led by Sharman Networks Ltd., took no action to rein in illegal file-sharing despite posted warnings on their Web site urging Kazaa users not to swap copyright material.

Wilcox said it had been in the financial interest of Sharman and its partners "to maximize, not minimize, music file-sharing."

He found six of the 10 defendants, including Sharman, its Sydney-based chief executive Nikki Hemming, as well as Altnet, a Sharman software partner, guilty of copyright infringement and ordered them to pay 90 percent of the record industry's costs in the case.

A hearing will be set later to establish damages.

"We will ask the court when it comes to damages to reflect the value of the music these people ripped off," Michael Speck, a spokesman for the Australian recording industry, said of the millions who have downloaded Kazaa.

In a brief statement, Sharman said it would appeal and Kazaa software remained available online, with more than 800,000 downloads reported last week and 390 million total since Kazaa first became available in 2001. Sharman says its software is no different from a tape recorder or photocopier - and that Kazaa could not control copyright infringement by users.

But Wilcox said that Kazaa's distributors actively encouraged users to share files, the vast majority of which were copyright material.

He said that if Kazaa is to continue its owners will have to ensure that new versions of the software filter out unlicensed copyright material, a task the judge said would be extremely difficult.

Wilcox stressed, however, that he was anxious not to damage legitimate file-swapping with his ruling. He said Kazaa needs to be changed "without unnecessarily intruding on others' freedom of speech and communication."

Kim Weatherall, a lecturer in intellectual property law at Melbourne University, called Wilcox's decision brave but potentially chilling to technology innovators.

"It is clear that the judge is concerned not to stop the technology completely but to try and work some middle line," she said.

The case is the latest in a long line of courtroom showdowns between purveyors of so-called peer-to-peer (P2P) networks and copyright holders led by the music and movie industries.

The U.S. Supreme Court's related June decision gave those industries the

go-ahead to proceed with suits against file-sharing software developers Grokster Ltd. and Streamcast Networks Inc. It said such companies can be liable if they deliberately encourage customers to infringe on copyrights as their businesses attempt to grow audiences and sell more advertising.

In a statement Monday, the Recording Industry Association of America praised Wilcox's ruling as continuing in that vein: "... this decision reflects a growing, international chorus: those who promote theft can be held accountable no matter how they may attempt to escape responsibility.

"A corrupt business strategy of attempting to hide off-shore is not off-limits to the enforcement of rights by creators or law enforcement," the RIAA added.

Kazaa has lost significant popularity since its 2002 heyday, due in part to legal pressure and sabotage efforts by the recording industry but also to the emergence of competing technologies.

Other peer-to-peer file-sharing tools and services that similarly do not require a central server, including BitTorrent and eDonkey, have supplanted it as the Internet's most popular.

FastTrack, the network tapped by Kazaa users, accounted for 10 percent of traffic volume in a six-week study begun in June of data swapped using the Internet's top four file-sharing applications. The study was done by CacheLogic.

Microsoft Files Appeal Against EU Ruling

Microsoft Corp. has filed a second appeal against a European Union ruling that ordered it to share code with open-source software companies, officials said Wednesday.

Microsoft spokesman Tom Brookes said the new appeal before the EU's second-highest court comes in the wake of a June agreement with the EU head office to let the courts decide the source-code issue.

"Microsoft has filed an application for annulment with the Court of First Instance specifically concerning the issue of broad licenses in source code form of communications protocols which are based upon Microsoft's intellectual property," he said.

"We are taking this step so the court can begin its review now of this issue, given its far-reaching implications for the protection of our intellectual property rights around the world," he said.

EU spokesman Jonathan Todd said the interoperability protocols of Microsoft software were not eligible for intellectual property protection and should be able to circulate among open-source companies according to their usual business licenses.

However, the EU's executive European Commission said it believed the matter would be settled if the Luxembourg-based Court of First Instance upholds the March 2004 ruling against the company.

Microsoft's latest filing on Aug. 10 could open up a second case. Todd said the EU was aware that Microsoft did not share its point of view on sharing

the protocols with open-source firms.

"If they do not share our point of view, they are of course free to go back to the court if they want to, which is what they've done," he said.

A date has not yet been set for the first appeal against the EU's order for Microsoft to pay 497 million euros ($620.41 million), Europe's largest-ever antitrust fine.

The EU claimed the software giant had abusively wielded its Windows software domination to lock competitors out of the market. It ordered Microsoft to sell a version of its Windows software without its Media Player and compelled it to share technology with competitors that make server software so their products can better communicate with Windows-powered computers.

Microsoft Launches Internet Crime Portal

At a High Technology Crime Investigation Association event on Wednesday, Microsoft announced plans to launch a Web site that will aid police in investigating Internet crime.

Analysts say the move should resonate with the law enforcement community as a valuable crime-fighting tool. The announcement comes on the heels of the FBI's Microsoft-aided investigation into the origins of the ZoTob worm, which crippled business across the U.S. last month.

"Over the past months, cybercrime has gone from casual to malicious to criminal," said Joe Wilcox, a senior analyst at Jupiter Research.

Planned resources for the site include online training sessions on how to conduct Internet investigations, extract information from hard drives and trace an IP address back to its source to identify Web site owners. The portal also will offer information on recently passed legislation related to Internet crime.

Analysts say that Microsoft's enormous resources and intimate knowledge of its software prompted the creation of the Web portal. Given Microsoft's recent focus on security and its in-house taskforce of roughly 50 investigators, some analysts see the new portal as a win-win for the company, its users and law enforcement.

According to Wilcox, everyone wins when industry is cooperating with law enforcement. "This is a way for Microsoft to give back to its customers," Wilcox said. "After all, who knows Windows better than Microsoft?"

But other experts are bit more skeptical about casting Microsoft as some sort of Lady Bountiful. They suggest the new portal might simply be a cry for attention.

"[It's] tough to say at this point how much of this is really more than a public relations exercise," said Phil Hollows, president of Open Service, a security-solutions developer. Hollows pointed out that the impact of such a Web site probably would be minimal for local law enforcement agencies that do not have the funds to secure dedicated I.T. resources and track down Internet criminals.

Hollows added that, although the smaller agencies will not be able to take advantage of the site, larger metropolitan forces will benefit because the site will help them consolidate their current knowledge and expertise with formal training.

But Hollows warned that businesses and consumers should not expect to see a significant drop in Internet crime. This move, he said, only will serve to help law enforcement agencies analyze Internet crime but do little to reduce or prevent it.

Yahoo Guilty of Hosting Phishers?

According to a consumer advocacy group, Yahoo and other Web site hosts are guilty of housing thousands of fraudulent Web sites aimed at ripping off Internet users.

The accusation was made by Spamhaus CIO Richard Cox during the eConfidence Spam and Scams conference held in London. Cox pointed to some 5,000 phishing sites, currently hosted by Yahoo, whose domain names include words such as "bank," "eBay" and "PayPal."

While the evidence seems overwhelming, only part of the blame can be laid at the door of Yahoo and other Web site hosts, according to at least one Internet security expert who agrees with Cox’s overall analysis but points out that this is a problem facing all domain-registration companies and hosting providers.

According to Jonathan Penn, an analyst at Forrester Research, phishing sites are problems that originate when the domain name is acquired rather than when a company agrees to house it. "Yahoo is just hosting the site," he said. "Why is the registrar issuing those domain names?"

Yet Web site hosts are guilty of being ill prepared to handle fraudulent sites, he contends. "I suspect this is an area where policies weren’t well defined," he said. "They need to look at better policy management in terms of how to look for and deal with these sites."

Penn suggests that hosting providers insert themselves into the domain-registration process if they want to avoid more reactionary security policies. While Yahoo does offer domain-registration services, the company is not involved in the registration of every site it hosts.

Penn also suggested that hosts streamline the process through which Internet users can report phishing. Complicated reporting procedures significantly contribute to the length of time these fraudulent sites remain up and running.

"A more efficient and effective response system will reduce the number of victims of any particular attack," he said.

Regardless of all the preventative and reactionary measures in place, Penn warned, phishing will continue.

States Tighten Laws On Internet Ads

In Michigan and Utah, companies now face stiff penalties and criminal prosecution if their Internet ads for products like alcohol, tobacco, gambling, lotteries or pornography end up in a child's e-mail box. Even an e-mail ad for an R-rated movie, something that is legal for kids to see with an adult, could violate the new laws, which went into effect last month.

Under Michigan's law, violators face fines up to $250,000 per day and up to a year in jail. In Utah, violators pay $1,000 for each message, are subject to criminal charges and face civil suits from parents.

What advertisers find particularly troubling is language in the Utah law that prohibits any e-mail ads that could be considered "harmful to minors." The law outlines "nudity, sexual content, sadomasochistic content, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse when it appeals to the prurient interest of sex in minors" as examples of what would be deemed harmful.

"This could be an ad for an R-rated movie in some communities in Utah," said Mary Ellen Callahan, a Washington lawyer with clients affected by the laws. "These laws could significantly harm advertisers and don't protect children."

To combat what it sees as a growing threat that could block legitimate advertising to adults, the Association of National Advertisers said it is considering filing a lawsuit against the two states.

"What gets put on the list of prohibited products is open-ended," said Dan Jaffe, ANA's evp of government relations. "If some product gets controversial, does it go on the list? People can start picking and choosing."

Other states, such as Illinois, are considering similar legislation. Given people's negative views of unsolicited e-mails, advertisers fear the movement could gain enough popularity that Congress will eventually pass national do-not-e-mail legislation.

Supporters of the laws counter that consumers should decide what type of commercial speech they want to see.

New Trojan Aims Koran at Viewers of Porn

A new Trojan has surfaced that targets Windows-powered PCs and displays a message from the Koran if it determines that a pornographic Web site is being accessed.

Called Yusufali.a by some security firms, and Cager.a by Trend Micro, the Trojan monitors a browser's title bar once a system is infected with the malware.

If a word in the URL matches one of the worm's trigger words, the site's window is minimized and a Koran quote pops up.

"Yusufali: Know, therefore, that there is no God but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how ye move about and ye dwell in your homes," the message reads.

Although infections with the new Trojan have been reported mainly in Iran, the malware has received global attention for its unusual nature. Rather than trying to lure victims into parting with their money or trick them into damaging their systems, Yusufali.a is more intent on preaching a message of morality.

"It’s quirky and very different from what we usually see," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at security firm Sophos. "It’s certainly a change from the monotony of worms designed to steal from you."

While the Trojan is not considered much of a threat, it could inspire imitators bent on spreading a religious or political message through such strong-arm tactics.

"This Trojan writer just wants to clean up the Internet, which is unique for a worm creator," noted Cluley. "But despite what they might see as the best of intentions, this isn’t the way to do it."

Because the Trojan is adept at blocking several porn sites, Cluley believes that some companies or individuals might be tempted to download the Trojan knowingly. However, he advises against such a strategy.

"There are legitimate Web-filtering programs that let you control which sites your employees or your kids visit," said Cluley. "The idea of putting controls into the hands of a Trojan is a bad one."

NerdTV Available by Free Internet Download

NerdTV identifies its target audience with its very name and with its format: It’s not available over the air but rather via a free Internet download.

The tech-focused interview show, created by pundit and PBS host Robert X. Cringely, is meant to be unlike anything on regular TV or elsewhere on the Internet, where video tends to come in short clips.

Instead, this is a "Charlie Rose"-style chat, about an hour, with "some incredibly smart person you always wanted to meet," Cringely says.

Among the names lined up for coming weeks are former Sun Microsystems Inc. guru Bill Joy, Apple Computer Inc. co-founder Steve Wozniak, computing pioneer Doug Engelbart and Google Inc. CEO Eric Schmidt.

This week’s debut offering was a talk with Andy Hertzfeld, who is described with a sort of nerdish breathlessness as "the first Macintosh programmer ... ever."

At one point, Hertzfeld recalls his amazement at discovering how Wozniak had designed the Apple II’s display screen: "He used a very clever trick of clocking the basic machine synchronous with color microburst, so effectively you could micro-program the NTSC signal."

You can’t say you weren’t warned.

Did Yahoo Help Send a Chinese Journalist to Jail?

A media watch group alleged this week that Yahoo gave the Chinese government access to e-mails sent from a journalist’s personal Web account, helping land him a 10-year jail sentence.

Shi Tao, an editorial department head at the Contemporary Business News in China’s Hunan Province, was convicted of divulging state secrets by a court in the provincial capital, Changsha, last April, according to Reporters Without Borders, a French press freedom organization.

The Yahoo e-mails were used as material evidence in the conviction, according to information provided by the group.

"We already knew that Yahoo collaborates enthusiastically with the Chinese regime in questions of censorship, and now we know it is a Chinese police informant as well," the group says.

Yahoo was not immediately ready to respond to the allegations, and a representative in the company’s Hong Kong office said it might issue a statement late Wednesday or early Thursday morning.

The media watch group says that while Internet companies like Yahoo and Google face a dilemma of complying with the laws of the countries in which they operate - leading them to censor certain information in China, and apparently hand over personal emails--they need to consider the cost of their efforts.

"Does the fact that [Yahoo] operates under Chinese law free it from all ethical considerations? How far will it go to please Beijing?" the group asks.

Tao pled guilty to the charges, according to materials related to the case provided by Reporters Without Borders, in the hope that doing so would reduce the penalty. The incriminating e-mail, sent on April 20, 2004, contained information regarding a Chinese government warning for its commissars to be vigilant ahead of the 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre and watch out for dissident activity.

The journalist sent the information via e-mail to a pro-China democracy Web site based in New York, www.asiadem.org, and it was published under the alias 198964, the date Beijing crushed the student-led democracy movement, June 4, 1989.

U.S. Internet companies have been scrambling to build their presence in China’s growing Web market. In recent months, EBay and Yahoo have inked deals to further their presence in the country. In a high profile deal announced last month, Yahoo agreed to pay $1 billion and turn over its China operations to Alibaba.com, in return for a 40 percent stake in the Chinese company.

Angry Women Sue NY Doctor for Online Dating Lies

A Manhattan fertility specialist has been sued by two women who say he broke their hearts after meeting them through an online dating site on which he pretended to be single.

In their lawsuits the two women, Tiffany Wang and Jing Huang, accused Dr. Khaled Zeitoun, 46, of pretending to be single and using mind games to entice them into sexual relationships with tales of past lives.

According to court papers filed in Manhattan Supreme Court and made public this week, Zeitoun is married with three children. Wang said she met him in March 2001 through a Web site on which he said he was single and had never married.

"Zeitoun claimed he and Wang had been married to each other in previous lives," Wang's lawsuit said, adding that the doctor told her he had mistreated her in that life and "searched for her in this lifetime to correct his past mistakes."

Wang says that in May 2002, he asked her to marry him but only proposed "to see the look of joy on her face."

In a separate suit filed earlier this year, Huang said she met the reproductive endocrinologist in October 2003 through an online dating service. He fed her a similar line about being single and having been married to her in a previous life.

Huang eventually realized he was cheating on her and the relationship ended in July 2004.

Both women are seeking unspecified money damages for infliction of severe emotional distress "outside the boundaries of human decency and social norms."

In a written response to the court papers filed by Huang, Zeitoun admitted that he told her he was single and had relationships with other women he met on the Internet.

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